

To: <khayen.prentice@esc.vic.gov.au>
cc:
From: [REDACTED]
Date: 23/02/2010 12:03:18 PM
Subject: Smart Meter Roll-Out Review

Good morning Ms.Wendy Heath,

Further to our telephone conversation this morning – I submit the following concern for inclusion in the pending review.

I was astounded and grossly disappointed to see my combined gas & electricity account from Victoria Electricity arrived and see an **increase of 66.5%** from the previous month.

This is NOT due to increased volume of energy used, but tariff and service charge increases “through the network” which involves United Energy, Mlutinet etc.

The break-down of these increases is as follows :

Electricity -	Tariff increase =	10.5%
	Service Charge =	27.2%
Gas -	Tariff Increase =	22.6%
	Service Charge =	23.0%

All these are significant increases – well above CPI figures. To people on fixed incomes – this is an intolerable burden. Totally irresponsible act on the of the Brumby government for authorizing such level of increases.

I assume this is due to the “Smart Meter” roll-out. Meters that will only benefit the energy providers by enabling monthly reading of the meter – remotely, instead of the quarterly reading practice at the moment.

Questions –

Why are we – the consumers asked to pay for the replacement meters when the existing ones are quite serviceable.?

What benefit do they provide the consumers that justifies such extravagant increases.?

Why not wait till the existing meters need replacement before actioning the “smart” replacements?

If these meters are so important – why doesn't the government assist the Energy providers with financial assistance for the roll-out – whether it is Fed. or State.? What purpose was the Infrastructure Fund established for ?

If the smart meters are electricity components – why are the gas rates increased also ?

If this is an indication of what we can expect once an ETS is implemented – God help us.

Statements quoted in media recently include the following **“spin”** :

“ With smart meters read remotely, **cheaper running costs for power companies will lead to cheaper electricity rates.**” (*my emphasis*)

Since when do energy suppliers pass-on financial benefits to consumers ?

How gullable do you think we are ?

You have the opportunity to review the decision to authorize the increases. You must impose restrictions on energy providers from passing on directly the cost of these replacements they deem necessary ..

Invest in their infrastructure and the cost of the deemed improvements can be amortised over a number of years - as all other businesses do. Not simply sting the consumers directly for the cost as is intended under this proposal.

No special treatment is warranted. No special dispensation need be offered by the government at the consumer's expense.

Please give this matter your due consideration and review the decision.

I am angry at this insensitive decision. No amount of "spin" is going to convince me other-wise. Don't waste funds advertising / brainwashing the electorate into accepting this decision. We have had enough "spin" from our politicians. It doesn't work. There is too much talk and too little considered action.

It is time to act. Show some initiative. Show some respect.

Don't waste your time with spin – ACT and reverse the decision to authorize energy increases.

Respectfully,

Mr. & Mrs. E. Siouclis